

A T R V E

AND CERTAINE

RELATION

Of a S T R A N G E - B I R T H,

which was borne at Stone-house in
the Parish of *Plimmouth*, the
20. of *October*. 1635.

T O G E T H E R

with the Notes of a Ser.

mon, preached *Octob. 23. 1635.*

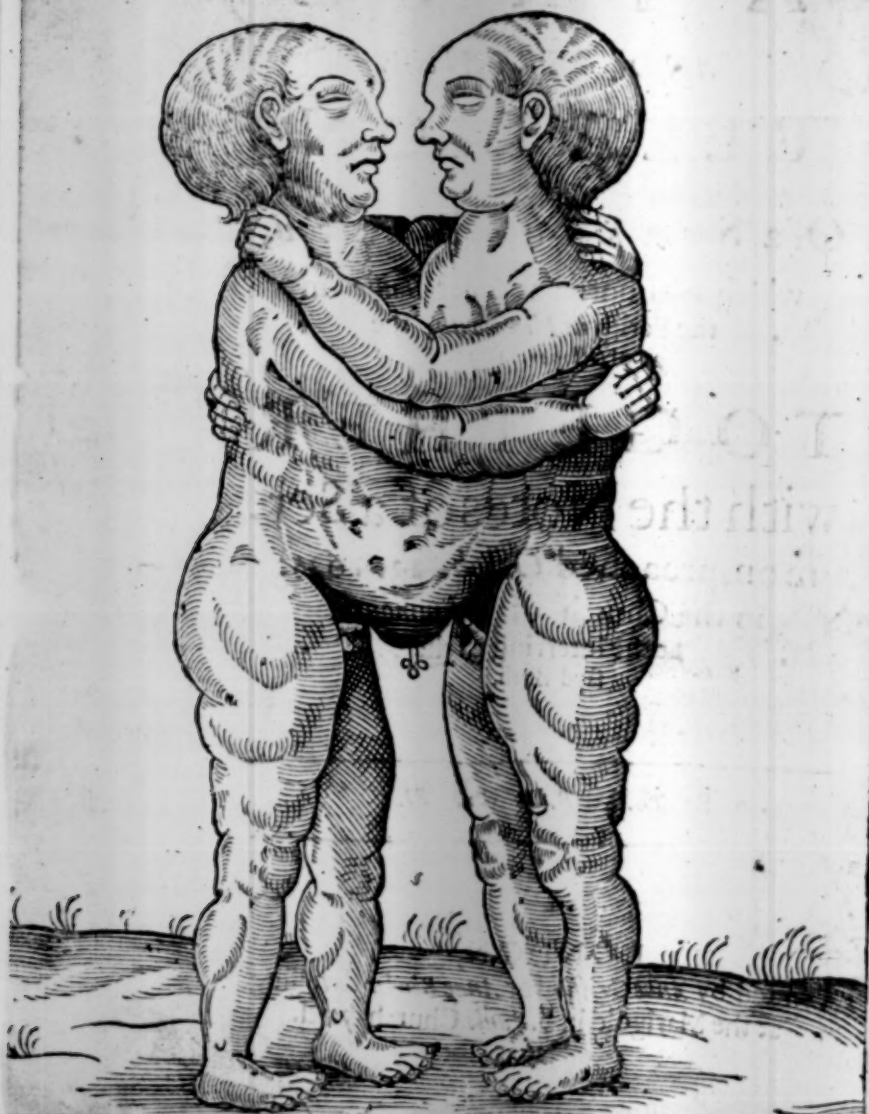
in the Church of *Plimmouth*,
at the interrring of the
sayd Birth.

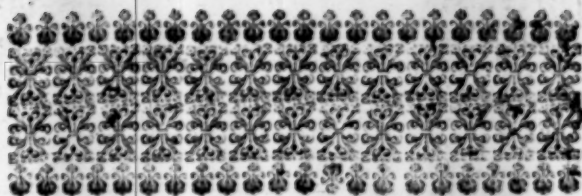
By, *Th. E. B. D. Pr. Pl.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Anne Griffin*, for *Anne Bowler* dwelling
at the Marigold in *S. Pauls Church-yard*.

Mss.





To the Curious *Beholder* of
the former *Picture*.

Desire Countrey-man.



NO T the meere fiction of the over-
daring Picturer doeſt thou here be-
hold: But (if he have done his part)
the true Pourtraiture of the worke
of God, preſented to the world to
be ſeene and to be admired.

Two things I have to deliver to thine eare,
which this figure cannot convey unto thine eye.
Firſt, what it intendeth: Next, how thou maielt
correct the Picture, if it need amending.

For the firſt; it intendeth to acquaint thee with
this ſtory. In the Countie of *Devon*, and in the
Parish of the famous Towne of *Plimouth*, there
is a Village called *Stone-houſe*; *Viculum Piſcatori-*
um I may juſtly terme it, a pretty little Fiſher-
towne, for it conſiſteth moſtly of men that live
by the Sea, and gaine their livelihood by the wa-
ter. In this village there dwelleth one *John Per-*

sons a Fisherman, whose wife having fulfilled the usuall moneths and weekes of womens burdens, upon the twentieth day of this present moneth *October* fell in travell, and by the helpe of a second Mid wife (through Gods mercy and goodnesse) was the poore mother (after the wearie travell of thirteene or foureteene painefull houres) safely delivered of the burden. A Birth not more painfull to the Mother (tho very painefull doubtlesse beeing still-borne,) then strange and wonderfull to all the beholders. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, with admiration : and, as it falleth out in such a case, soone is the fame thereof spread all abroad. Towne and Countrey commeth in to see, that hereafter they might (as I for my part must) say ; At such a time, in such a place, I saw the strangest birth in all respects, that ever I saw or heard before. Two heads, and neckes, two backs, and sets of ribbes, foure armes and hands, foure thighes and legges : in a word, from head to heele (so farre as the eye could discerne) two compleat and perfect bodies, but concorporate and ioyned together from breast to belly, two in one.

For the second thing propounded, *viz.* how to correct the picture, if it need amendment ; take this. When I first cast mine eye upon them lying on the table, I said, surely if those children had bin living, Art might have caused a just separation of them, for I conceived them to bee no other than two bodies joyned together in one common skin. But I soone perceived mine Errour, when putting

ting my finger to feele the Collar the Cannell-
 bone (I meane that place where you see them *On ferula.*
 begin to joyne together) I found that they had
 but one breast-bone common to them both, and
 by it, as by a partition wall, were their two bo-
 dies (as two chambers) both joyned & separated:
 joyned together in respect of the externall bulke,
 separated in respect of the internall contents.
 This concorporation lasted downe to the Navell
 or a little beneath, which also was in common to
 them both, I still speak of what the eye could see,
 happily so soone as that string of the umbilicall
 vessels, by which the mothers wombe supplied
 food and nourishment to the birth had passed the
 skinne, it might dispart it selfe. But outwardly it
 was one in common. Whence also it was conje-
 ctured, that though these twinnes might have
 severall hearts, and lungs answerable to their
 severall heads and neckes, yet but one common
 Liver to them both. The truth of this conjecture
 I leave to the Colledge of Physitians to discover,
 that is not my profession, nor will I presume to
 determine any thing in anothers Art, onely this
 Obiection I have against it: that supposing one
 common Liver, it must either gird them round
 or be misplaced in one of them: for turning brest
 to brest, and belly to belly, you ioyne the left side
 of the one body to the right side of the other: so
 that I say, except the liver do compasse it round, it
 shall be misplaced in the one.

But to returne to the story. These two twins
 were not more neerely ioyned in the bulk of bo-

dy, than they were in all parts and proportions like to one another where they were disparted; so that two the likest twins that ever you saw were not more like : nay the glasse cannot (I thinke) give a truer answer to the face than these were each to other. Which I doe the more boldly affirme, because having satisfied mine eye with beholding them on the one side as they lay, I caused the women to turne the other side, and laying them as before (face to face, and foot to foot) I could perceive no difference in them at all from what I had seene before. One thing I forgot, till it was too late : which if I had remembred, I verily perswade my selfe, might have been done, *viz.* To lay them one upon another. The which I mention, lest happily any might conceive that the ioynture of their bodies might leane to one side more than to another. I was about to aske the women whether the mother felt them living in the wombe ; when presently I corrected my selfe, seeing each part and limbe, yea, and the whole body of either growne (as indeed it was) to a iust maturity : each by himselfe, had they beene sundered, had been a iust birth; having haire on the heads, nailes on their hands and toes, nay which is more (except the women were much deceived they had some teeth in their head: and to confesse the truth, I thought so too, till others that had more skil and experience perswaded me to the contrary. Howsoever, the children were each of them as compleat and perfect as Births use to be.

Vpon

Vpon these grounds I corrected my selfe in my former intended question : for how should they grow to that perfection of stature, had they wanted life? But the mid-wife and the women told me, that they were living and lively some few houres before they were borne : So that in all likely-hood, had a skilfull hand been made use of at the first, they might have lived to see the light, if not to inioy it. But God that gave them a life and beeing in the wombe, knowing that life upon earth would have beene a burden to them, provided better for them, and tooke them to himselfe.

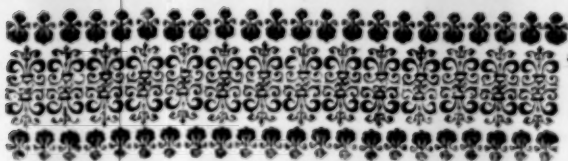
Thus have I given a true, and I thinke a full narration of this worke of wonder which God hath shewed here amongst us. And with it, I am content to send abroad some few notes prepared for the confluence of people, met together, when this birth was layed into the earth. Something me thought was fitting to be commended to them that saw it, while the thing was fresh in mind, and that something such as it is : loe here it is. Rather would I shame my selfe in being over-busie, than be wanting in what I conceit may not be unprofitable to the countrey wherein I live. Read then these notes, And if thou count not this halfe houre ill bestowed, thou wilt I trust (I desire thou wouldest) pray for him, who if thou love the Lord *Iesus* in sincerity, prayeth for thee, that thou maiest prosper and be in health, even as thy soule prospereth.

Farewell,

Plimmouth, Octob. 30.

16 35,

B



Heb. 11. 3.

Being dead, yet speaketh.



Since the Word of God, so the Workes of God are for our Doctrine and instruction. The works of Creation teach us, saith Saint *Paul*, Gods eternall power and Rom. 1. 10. God-head. The works of his providence are not behind hand with us: and there-

fore saith the Holy Prophet, *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.* True this is in Psal. 19. 3. the ordinary and common workes of providence: But much more remarkable in those that are extraordinary, when either the course of Nature is hindered, as the Sea and Sunne stop in the midst of their Carrier: or altered, as when the Sunne went backe-ward in the daies of *Hezekiah*. Touching which, saith the *Psalmist*, *Hee hath made his wonderfull workes to be remembered*; or as the words stand in the Originall, and the Greeke translation. Psal. 111. 4. A memoriall hath he made to his wonderful works, *ide est*, Hee hath ordained and commanded that they should be remembered; Good reason, that where God with his finger pointeth forth something in speciall to the sonnes of men, they should follow it with the Eye of the body, till the eye of the soule, *viz.* the understanding spirit have thence received some instruction.

Not onely the other Creatures: but also the Sonnes of men are otherwhiles made the object of these wonderfull workes of God: Or if you had rather call it the sub-

ZcKcA
GNaSaH
LeNiPhLcAo
Thall.
Mreias imo-
cto daupani-
or durt.

jest matter, on which he stampeth the markes of his Providence, either in hindering, or in altering the Ordinary course of Nature, sometimes in the conception, sometimes in the births of our expected and desired issue.

*Conceptionis flatus uerh. cum
mors et semina semen facun-
dum ab excepitur, mictetur,
fovetur, aliusque uia ad propriu
muent ex quendam excutatur
Dan. Sennert. Med. li. 4. part. 2.
Sect. 4. cap. 4.*

Conception, I count the naturall and proper worke of the wombe, in receiving, retaining, and ripening the seed for the Birth. The wombe is by the hand of God, sometimes closed up, that it receiveth not, as in the case, of *Abimilech's* family, *Gen. 20.* sometimes opened or rather loosened, that it retaineth not, as in the case of Abortive and untimely births. Sometimes weakened, that it ripeneth not the birth, either not at all, or at least not within the just time.

*Vide Sennertum capite de
partu cardo. Quarex historiis
confirmat partum uolunt-
quam differri ad mensum 13. 14.
15. 18. 20. 23. 24. Hec rara (in-
quis) et pene miraculosa sunt;
acciditque procul dubio ab se-
men debile, uterque calorem
languidum, locum de caute in
fari cardum absoletur, et ex-
pulatrix faculae languet.*

And all these doe teach us the pre-
sence of Gods Providence. Well may we say, The hand of God hath beene there. It is hee that thus hath hindered the worke of the wombe, and withheld the blessing of a good Conception. So for the birth.

Birth I must call that which properly and from the Latine we might call Parturition. This doth God by the hand of his speciall providence hinder sometime in part,

*Partus prater-naturalis est,
triplex. Difficilis, Nullus, et
Caesareus. Difficilis, ut in
Agrippis. Quibus nomen indi-
cunt est (Aulus Gellio No-
ctium Aulus in lib. 16. cap. 15
eo quod in nascendo, non caput,
sed pedes primi extiterunt, scilicet,
in Agrippa dicuntur ab agritu-
dine et pedibus: Cum potius ab
agritudine partus: qui non
sancum sit ex pedibus, sed ex
manibus; praeterim semen ex*

sometime in whole: So that whereas all times of the womans Trave ll and labour are full of sorrow, yea (as the Philosopher saith, *Aristot. de Historia Animalium, Lib. 7. cap. 9* and the Scripture it selfe in part doth confirme the same) more full of difficulty and danger than any other creatures (an evident demonstration of

of the Hand of God, vitiating the first
 Sinne of our Grandmother *Eve*,
 upon all the Sex) whereas I say all
 times are full of sorrow, of feare
 and frightfulness: some doe re-
 ceive an increase and multiplicati-
 on, by such accidents supervenient,
 and unexpected dangers of birchs
 not capable of deliverance till God
 by the hand of speciall Art vouch-
 safe his gracious helpe, and good
 assistance. Of these therefore, as
 of the former, well may wee say,
Digitus dei, It is the finger of God
 that hath beene here, and manifested
 his presence by hindering the com-
 mon and ordinary course of Nature in the Birth of the
 Wombe.

As in hindering, so also in altering and changing
 the course of Nature, doth God call man to an obser-
 vation of his Providence: Nay heere more than in
 any thing else doth hee shew forth his workes of wonder:
 understand me still to speake of the Conception and of the
 Births of the sonnes of men. What variety of strange
 births doe wee see and heare of. Strange births wee
 call them: more properly, wee might terme them
 strange Conceptions: for what the wombe in Con-
 ception formeth, that is not usually altered in the birch,
 What varietie (I say) of strange-birches doe wee see
 and heare of? Strange

(a) *Stature*. This is sometimes Giant-like; other-
 whiles Dwarfish and Pigmy-like. Sometimes be-
 yond, sometimes beneath and short of the ordinary,
 usual and common stature of mankind; and as it
 thus falleth out in respect of the whole body, so som-
 times in the parts, One or a parts of the body, being of
 a different proportion, bigger or lesser than the rest.

B 3

(c) Mul-

*male corpora abutenda et exitum
 ambuancipit pates ex Seneca
 trico, de pariu difficili prae-
 maturale. Partu Nilum dicitur
 quoriam infans excludis in quatuor
 frustaque conatur misera par-
 turienti se ipsam omne sua libe-
 rare et expellere, mortuus nomi-
 natus fuit, qui nisi vel medica-
 mentis excollatur, vel Chirurgi
 opera extrahatur, mortuus et
 miseriam mari ministratur Par-
 tus Caesareus Caesari nomen fa-
 cit. Ille enim qui primus Cae-
 sari nomen adeptus est, ab eo
 dictus fertur, quod caeso matris
 utero natus fuerit. Caesareus quod
 ex utero excisus fuit, nominatur;
 ipsaque illa actio dicitur partus
 Caesareus. Ex his plerique mor-
 tui, nonnulli vivi; adque (quod
 raro accidit) matre superflue et
 revalescente.*

(b) Number of parts. The strangeness here is in defect or excess. Def. 2, when one or both hands or feet are wanting: Such was that woman which we saw here the last year, who wanted hands, and supplied the want of them in many particulars by her feet, Excesse of number: Such was that Cyax mentioned, Sam. 21. 20. who had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, foure and twenty in number. Hitherto referre those whom the Greeks do call, *ais gygus*, such was *Hermaphroditus*, the sonne of *Mercury* and *Venus*, if we may give credit to the notation and composition of his name.

(c) Multiplication of severall births is rare. Twins are not frequent in our colder climat, much lesse the multiplication of Births, yet such we finde recorded, See *Seneca* cap. de *Generum generatione*, who out of *Archiele*, *Pliny*, and some Moderne Authors hath shew the certainty of this. Notorious and in the mouth of every man is that story of *Margaret*, Sister to *Earle Floris* the fourth (as *Hein* relateth, writing of *Holland*) who being of the age of two and forty yeeres, brought forth at one birth three hundred three score and five children, halfe of them males, halfe females, and the odd one an *Hermaphrodite*. They were christened in two Batons at the Church of *Lothoven*, by *Guido Suffragan* to the Bishop of *Perugia*, who named the Males *Isidus*, and the Females *Elizabeth*: all which immediately after died, and with them their motherlike Batons are yet to be seene in the afore said Church. Thus saith *Hein*. This miracle, or miraculous accident befell her (say some) as she just hand of God upon her, for that when a certain young woman having two children hanging at her breasts, asked of her an almes, shee bitterly upbraided the woman with whoredome, for that shee had both those at one birth, adding, that it was not possible for a woman to conceive two births at once, except by fornication. A good warning don't lesse to all such headed censurers, who spare not to speake of others at their owne pleasure.

(d) Concorperation of births, is almost miraculous, that two should be joynd into one. Yet sue there have bene, as appeareth by *Landisius*, in that answer which hee gave to the question. *An et quomodo monstra sint baptizanda* whether at all, and if so, then how monstrous and mishapen births are to be baptized. A question, that if these incorporated Twins had bene borne alive and lived to Baptisme might have put the Minister to his bookes how to proceed in the case. The answer to the question is this: *Si perpendatur unus habere animam,*

(e) Multiplication: strange in the (d) Concorperation of severall births, but above all most strange in (e) quality & kind altered and changed. All these, but especially this later sort, which alter the qualitie and kinde, the Latines call *Monstra a monstrando, quia monstrantur*, I would adde, *ut monstrant*. They are shewed that they may shew the speciall handyworke of God, and though, peradventure deade, yet speake, and tell the forgetful world, that God himselfe hath a speciall hand in forming, and featuring the births conceived in the wombe. Here by the way, let mee touch upon a case of conscience, or two. Whether Monsters and mishapen births may

may lawfully be carried up and downe the country for sights to make a gaine by them? Whether the Births being once dead, may be kept from the grave for the former ends? Whether the parents of such births may sell them to another. For my part I would be loth to prejudice the better and morall judgements of any. But to speak plainly, I do make scruple of the first, and therefore much more of the two later cases. For if not living they are to be prostituted to the covetousnesse of any; much lesse being dead, when the grave calls for the bodies of all Christian births: the grave, I say, wherein they are to be laid up: that therein they may lay downe, the present dishonor, and thence

supra duo capita, quatuor brachia, quatuor pedes, duas spinas in dorso, & huiusmodi. cum baptizetur quilibet pro se, & insingatur in loco quilibet per se, id est. If you perceive that they have two soules, as thus: That they have two heads, foure armes, foure feet, two backs and backe-bones, and the like: Then let each of them be baptizd by himselfe, &c. Of two con- corporated and joynd backe to backe, was reade. The story is remembered in *Rodericus à Castro*, a Physician of speciall note throughout all Europe, as the Title of his Booke doth stile him. He, in *Lib. 1. de Morbu mulierum, cap. 6.* comming to speake of monstrous births, mentions five severall kinds of them (as also before him had *Andreas Laurentius* in his *Historia Anatomica, lib. 8. Qu. 14*) more particularly hee maketh the third kinde to be of them that are defective or redundant. *Quo numero*, saith hee, *comprehenduntur duo illi qui tergo uno pro duobus personantur, moribus tamen diversi, viginti annos vixerunt, & cum vniu mortem obierit, alter sandu supervoxit, quoad fecit ac germani postulatque suis eximetur.*

Two, saith hee, that we joynd backe to backe, and it seemeth contrary in their manners, as in their looks. They lived twenty yeeres, and when one of them died, till the putrefaction of that body which could not be separated, did prove the destruction of the survivour. But no mention doe any of the fore-named Authors make of such a birth as this of ours: so that it is likely that they had heard of none such. But proceed.

(c) Quality and kinde: The alteration of this, is called *monstrum*, and indeed monstrous: whether of the whole, or of some part. Alteration of the whole kinde was reade of: Beasts that have brought forth mankinde births, and women brainth shapes. *Andreas Angelus de Mirabilibus mundi in Historia Anni 1599 In April* (inquis) *Bauguin in Hispania insulam quendam Manstrum prout mundus: quod ex mulierum ad varias scriptis ille et Venetiis certis confusis litteris, Jbi enim vacca, quaedam duos viros et integros omnes homines masculinos et feminas omnia esse in lucem.*

Semperum, cap. de monstris (so also *Castro* and *Laurentius ibidem*). *Interdum accidit ut femina varia monstra vivencia et animalia prout et contra naturam producant. Serpentes, canes, et alia animalia, vel facta hominum partes habentes, et alias esseque variis modis monstris generis fuisse à Lycothene, et aliis qui de prodigiis et monstris scripserunt, videre est. Neque opera pretium est historias illas huc adducere.*

These two also are mentioned by *Aristotle* in his *Problems, Cap. De Monstris.*

* Iteration of parts: Ex Theophrasti Historia, Ezech Doctor Barad relates this History. A certaine Nobleman used every Lords day to goe on hunting in sermone time; which impiety the Lord punished with this iudgement. Hee caused his wife to bring forth a child with an head like a dogge. That seeing he preferred his dogges before the service of God, hee might have one of his owne going to make much of. Whitherto referre such strange births as have some turbidous excrecencies. See one recorded by Castro De Natura Mulierum, li. 3. ca. 11. quod habebat cornu in capite alas duas, &c. Here in this towne not many years agoe, when women layed their haire forth upon wires, a child was born which had on the head (as I am credibly informed) gristles growing in the shape and fashion of those attires and dres, singa.

* Adfectus formati-
onem requiruntur
aria: se.

(1) Ipsius seminis
faciendum utrius-
que parentis

(2) Sanguis mater-
nis ad nutriendum
factum.

(3) Verum matris
hinc coactum,
quod seminis concep-
tum foueat, cuiusque
lactem non ex-
cise: supponitur
cum quam
dam alteram lete-
re in semine (dico
omne semen illud
quod Græci mixtum
(c) seminis ex utroque
parentis mixtum)

supponitur ipsam
cum quamdam late-
re, quam uterius
mater mixt suo calo-
re excitat ad alimen-
tum suum peragen-
dum: hoc cum trium
siquid deest: siquid
debile sit, aut mor-
bum habens, hinc fit
(inquit Philosophus
aut vitiosa sequatur
conformatio totius,
aut saltem partium)

be raised againe in
glory. And if the pa-
rents may not doe
this; how much lesse
may they deliver it
over to another? But
you will say to mee,
suppose them living,
why may they not be
used to this end, bee-
ing fit for none im-
ployment? My rea-
sons are these. Our
delight is to be mea-
sured by our desires,

nor doe I see it lawfull to delight in what may not be de-
sired. And who would desire a mishapen Birth, to be the is-
sue of his owne body? Adde this, all Crosses call for Hu-
miliation: and where that is expected, I see not how there
can bee place either for profit or pleasure to bee thought
upon.

But to returne againe to what wee had in hand. These
Births (as I said) though dead, yet speake and preach to
the world the present hand of God in the wombe of the
mother.

* In all these accidents and occasions the Philosophers
(and physicians also who build upon the ground of Philo-
sophy, nor can well subsist without them) they I say would
attribute all these impeditions and alterations of Nature to
secondary causes: either internall, as the defectiveness or
excesse of seminall materials; or externall, as the dul-
nesse of the formative facultie, or indisposednesse of
the Vessells, or strength of Conceit or Imagina-
tion.

The

The Astrologer may adde another cause, powerfull in his opinion, to pervert and overthrow the good intentions of Nature, *sc.* the constellations of the planets, and configuration of their aspects. And happily they may pitch upon some reasons for the coalition of these two twinnes into one: nor doe we deny but the Philosopher may bee allowed in these his conjectures: nor may hee seeme to shoot beside the marke, that should ascribe it to some accident, colliding and dashing these two new-formed Embryons in the wombe, casting them so one upon the other, as that the contiguity and overmuch closenesse of their bodies caused the aforesaid coalition: so have wee scene two trees over closely leaning one upon another grow into one, and covered with one barke. The Philosopher, I say, may seeme to speake reason (not so the Astrologer, at least in mine Opinion.) Onely he and others must bee intreated to looke higher, and to take notice of the speciall hand of God, whose worke alone it is to sort and compound the activities of secondary causes; that what by the blessing of God might have beene otherwise, is now thus disposed of for ends best knowne to himselfe.

This is the conclusion which Religion teacheth: and which it becommeth mee as a Divine to put you in minde of. The Astrologer is taught to say, *Astra regunt homines.* The influence of the Starres doe rule the Actions of the sonnes of men. But the Christian knoweth that *regis astra Deus*, God over-ruleth the starres. So that if wee should grant an influence in the planets, and a power in the Constellations: yet farre be it from us to account it fatall, and inalterable: No we know that God sitteth in the Heavens, and doth whatsoever hee will. *David* in the Psalmes ascribeth to his hand the framing of his body and members in the wombet. *Thine hands have made me and fashioned*

Psa. 119. 73.

Psa. 139. 13. 16.

mr. Thou hast covered mee in my mothers wombe. Thine eyes (saith hee) *did see my substance yet beeing unperfekt, and in thy booke all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned: or (as it is in the Margent) all of them written, what dayes they should be fashioned,* when as yet there was none of them. To him therefore belongeth the disposing of the materialls and shaping of the Birth: Now then, is God so tyed to his materialls, that if there be too much for one, or too little for two complete and perfect features, hee can neither detract nor multiply? Must his worke bee cut off with what the Philosopher saith of Nature, *Intendit quod optimum, facit tamen id quod potest*: that is, Nature intendeth perfection, but beeing hindered doth what she can?

Let no man therefore taxe me of any excesss in religious thoughts, or count it overmuch curiositie, if I propound to you an observation or two, grounded upon this and the like occasions. Each Comet (as experience hath taught men) is in its kinde Doctrinal, and blaseth forth something or other worthy our observation. *Nec in usum toties affere Cometa*: Seldome are those super-terrestriall blazes kindled in vaine. Men do commonly count them *præ-nuncios belli et calamitatum*, fore-runners of some imminent calamities, and therefore doe call upon one another to appease the wrath of God, by fasting and Humiliation.

I shall not therefore I hope, transcend the limits of my calling, nor wrong the providence of God, if I take liberty to say, touching this strange-birth, which God hath caused to blaze here amongst us, and from us, to the whole Countrey, to say of it, as the Apostle saith of the bloud of *Abel*; beeing dead, it yet speaketh. What did or doth the bloud of *Abel* speake, but the irreversibile wrath of God against Cain, & in him against all wilfull and malicious persecutors of religious persons? I doe not say, this speaketh

so

Tully, Lucan.

Iosep. de bello

Iud. lib. 7. ca. 12.

so bitter things ; but yet it speaketh something in common with the rest of strange and mishapen Births : and if I deceive not my selfe over-much , something in peculiar by it selfe : so then it speaketh two things , perhaps more , but two I pitch upon , not averring them both spoken with the same evidence , but both truly : and which is more , seasonably .

First then this , and all monstrous & misfeatured Births , *Observa. 1.* speake this : That it is a singular Mercie of God , when the Births of the Wombe are not mis-formed : when they receive their faire and perfect feature . A Lesson truly worth the noting in this forgetfull Age : Mercies that are ordinarie wee swallow ; and take small notice of them : Such a worke as this causeth us to see what difference there is betwixt comelinesse and deformity : betwixt Perfection and Imperfection in the Body . Doth any make scruple of what I say ? Let that man consider the discomfort of Deformitie : How lyable it is daily to exprobration through the evill custome of wicked men , more ready to cast it in the teeth , than condole or commiserate , if God hath stamped a deformity upon the Bodie .

Know wee not that the members of the Bodie are the Organs and Instruments of the Soul , in the Service of God and man ? Defect or excesse must needs breed grieve , because it createth trouble . Consider wee this birth , thus double-membred , to have seene them lying upon the table ; to see them deciphered upon the paper might happily be thought a sight not much unpleasant : But let your imagination give them life , and tell mee how uncomfortable , yea burthensome must they be to others , yea and to themselves : when as though two , yet so neere incorporated , that the one cannot helpe the other . How should they eat , sleep , walke , sit , or satisfie nature , but with much incumbrance

cumbrance. Is it then discomfort to have a marke' of deformity or dis-advantage cast upon the Births of the Womb? And is it not a singular Mercie to have them born compleat in shape and feature? Doubtlesse it is.

All reason therefore is that this Mercie of God unto us in the issue of our Loins should be acknowledged with all thankfulnessse. If other Mercies, why not this? The Husbandman, when hee hath his Corne and Wine increased, when housed: The Merchant, when his Venture is returned: The Owner when his Ship is arrived, and both have made a good voiage: If there be any religion dwelling in their breasts, will in a solemne manner confesse before the Sonnes of men the loving kindnesse of the Lord. When women have received safe deliverance from the great paines and perills of Child-birth, the Church doth call them (and surely it had need to call them) to give hearty thanks to God: And ought not this also to be remembered, That the Children borne give hope of Comfort to their Parents? Hope I say, that a faire and well-featured Body may be the comfortable house and habitation of an Holy soule? Doubtlesse it ought: Dath not David intimate so much in the afore-mentioned Psalme, when hee saith, I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Mervailous are thy Workes, and that my Soule knoweth right-well.

Psal. 139. 14.

Know wee not that God hath just cause to blast every birth of ours, if he would be extreme? Partly, in respect of the abuse of the Bed; which, though hee hath sanctified to the use of man by the benediction of the Church, that so in the sober use thereof every one should possesse his Vessell in sanctification and honour; yet is it too often riotously and wantonly abused. Partly, I say, for these Abuses, but specially in respect of that Originall corruption which cleaveth to the Fruit of the womb, even from the

the first conception, as the Psalmist sheweth. From this
 guilt and filth not one of all the Race of Adam is exemp-
 ted. No sooner doe we receave a Being, but it is ac-
 companied with sinfulness: In which respect, who can
 denie, but God might justly blast the body with deformity?
 Which if hee doe not when hee might, is it not a favour,
 and so to be acknowledged? Wee acknowledge it a spe-
 ciall favour to the Soule (as it is reason wee should) that
 God doth exempt any from that common damnation,
 which is due to all by Adams transgression: And is it not
 to be confessed a Mercie to the body? For why? VVhen
 the body doth want its perfect feature, when the Soule
 doth want the exercise of wit and reason, more or lesse:
 Is not this an effect of Sinne, and so to bee accounted:
 Doth God in this any thing more than what Iustice doth
 allow? Shall wee say it is an act of his absolute Domi-
 nion? Itrow not: VVhat is justly done to some, is it not
 mercie, not to doe to others? Yes (my Dearely beloved)
 it is Mercie, free and undeserved Mercie: O that in this
 also, as in other things, I say, O that men would therefore
 praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderfull
 VVorks to the Sonnes of men!

Contrarily, when the Hand of Iustice hath found any
 out, when any birth of ours is brought into the world
 misformed, and mis-featured: If God hath (as it were)
 spit in the face, and laid the black-finger of Deformity
 upon the body, ought it not to bee entertained with sor-
 row of Heart, and Humiliation? Hath God written in
 great Letters the guilt of Sin, and in a deformed body
 drawn a resemblance of the Soules deformity; drawn it
 (I say) so; that others may see and know, that wee
 also are defiled in his sight? and shall wee not blush to
 heare it, to see it thus cast in our teeth, and laid be-
 fore us?

This for the Parties : but is this all? Is it nothing to you all that passe by, or that come to see? Mee thinkes it should : Can you, any of you, wash your hands in Innocencie? are not you also Sinners in the sight of God? VVhat can you alledge, why this might not have beene yours? Did you prevent it by prayer? I trust you will hereafter : and acknowledge the justnesse of their Devotion, who remember women with child : but happily you have not hitherto thought upon it: If so; If God might have throwne the tower of Siloam upon your heads also, if set a marke of his displeasure upon your births, and yet hath not done it; will you not see and say, The Lord hath done great things for us? Lord, what am I, that thou hast spared mee? am I more holy, lesse sinfull than my neighbour? No, no : It is thy free Mercie and undeserved Favour, Oh enlarge my heart to praise thy Name.

Heere then see and bewaile the iniquity and irreligion of this our Age, at least of numbers in the same. The common sort make no further use of these Prodigious and Strange-births, than as a matter of wonder and table-talk : looke upon them with ~~none other eyes~~, than with which they would behold an African monster, a mishapen beast. It was not thus in the better Ages of the world. VVee reade in the ninth Chapter of Saint Iohn : that the Disciples, when they saw the man that was borne blind, they come to our blessed Savior, with *Quis peccavit?* Mr Who hath sinned? See the Religion of those times : They lookt upon sinne as the cause of defective or redundant births. Truth indeed, our Saviour answereth : Neither this man, nor his parents. By which Speech of Christ, wee must not thinke that they are excused from all sinne : doubtlesse his parents had sinned; and conceived him in sinne, elsé had not this beene cast upon him : No place for defects and deformities in the state of Innocence. But why

God

God should take the forfeiture in this, rather than in his Neighbour, this was meerely *Ex Dei bene-placito*, the good pleasure of God, who had in this a purpose to prepare and make way for the glory of Christ in curing the man.

The same happily might bee said in these occasions whereof wee speake: To the Question, *Quis peccavit*; Who hath sinned? happily Christ (who was acquainted with the Counsels of his Father) might answer; *Neque hic, neque parentes*, Neither he, nor his Parents: Not to exempt them from sinne altogether, but to teach us, that some other end & purpose God had beside the visitation of their sin: (though that also we find sometimes to be manifested, when God by such occasions doth awaken the conscience to confesse secret and unbewailed sins) beside, I say, the visitation of sin: Sometimes to discover the Atheism, Irreligion of many, perhaps also their Covetousnesse, who would rather make a benefit of such births, & in stead of Humiliation for a Crosse, teach the parents to account such births for blessings, which doe prove so profitable. Sometimes to prompt unto the Ministerie a word of exhortation needfull for the present state of the people: A meditation which happily his text would not afford him. *Ex. gr.* This Lesson, as you see, is by this occasion prompted to me, presented to you: That you remember hereafter, to acknowledge it as a Mercie: when Children come into the world well-furnished, the members of their body in a due proportion aptly each to other corresponding, neither defective, nor redundant: To bewaile it as a crosse from God, when it is otherwise: that so penitencie may provide a Remedie, either of the deformity by the hand of Man; or of the discomfort by the stroke of Death.

This

This Lesson, I say, is now presented to you, and I trust will be remembered by you: And if so; the Answer to the Question may goe on as it is in the words of our Saviour. Neither this man, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

To winde up this first observation in a word, I noted the religion of the Disciples: they looke up to sinne as to the cause of Gods Hand: nor shall it misbecome us to doe the like: provided alway, that it be (what they forgot) in our owne occasion rather than in anothers. Doe I suffer? Let mee say, Lord, I have sinned; Thou art just. Doth another suffer? Let mee say, Lord, thou art mercifull to me: this case might have beene mine. Blessed be thy Name for ever.

Something long have I stood upon this, because I am sure this is a Lesson, which all monstrous and misshapen births, though dead, yet speake for the Instruction of the Living: I will dispatch the other more briefly, which may seeme to be peculiar to this one in respect of the shape thereof.

Observat. 2.

The twinnes you see are males; brothers, had they beene borne alive. To love as brethren, is the duty of Christians: a Duty frequently remembered, by the Apostles, and powerfully pressed. To love, is to have one soule in two bodies; One, not so much by union of essence as by combination of Affection: And so, here a fit resemblance of this mutuell duty: As fit, as lively almost as can be devised: Here are all the parts and members of Consultation, and operation for two persons; onely here is one body, one brest, one belly: the brest the seat of the heart, the belly of the bowells: One I say, not in the Identity of substance

stance; but in the conglutination of externall parts from brest to belly: whether one heart, one liver, one community of Intestines, is more than wee could see; though all reason indeed giveth them to be two throughout in all parts: yet you see, so two in one, that had they lived to the yeares of expression, wee might well have expected from them united hearts, intire affections, and more than Sympathie, each to other, as to himselfe. Surely, these are not more neerely conjoynd in brest and belly, than Christians ought to be in heart & affection. These two were one body; Christians are one spirit: though severall bodies and soules, yet one and the same spirit diffused into all, to enlive and quicken all. Nor would it have beene more prodigious for these Twinnes (suppose they had lived to bee men) to have quarrelled and contested one against another: than it is for Christians to quarrell and contend, specially to live in the minde of irreconciliation. To these Twianes (had they quarrelled) a man might have sayd, you are one body: To Christians a man may well say, You are one spirit: why doe you wrong one to another? Was that an Argument in all reason fit to compound the supposed differences of these? And shall not this bee able to perswade peace, nay love among Christians? Mee thinketh it should: Nay, I am sure, if this doe not prevaile, the faultie person shall one day smart for it: perhaps when Repentance for it will come too late.

Cor. 12. 13.

Well, I have now acquainted you with my thoughts. I have shewed to you, how this Birth, though dead, yet speaketh: Truth it is, Faith alone hath eares to heare these Lessons, these Instructions: Nature is deafe, and Reason dull in these occasions: A brutish

Pf. 92. 6.

D

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man knoweth not; neither doth a foole understand :
Faith quickneth the Vnderstanding to apprehend : the
Will to believe : the Affections to take pleasure in
these Meditations.

Which Faith, since it is the gift of God, let us now
turne our selves to him with hearty devotion, desiring
him to bestow upon us the gift of Faith, and all graces,
by which wee may learne to make an holy use, as of
all his Workes in generall, so of this and the like in
speciall : to the glory of his Name, and the eternall
comfort of our owne soules, through Iesus Christ our
Lord. To whom with the Father and the blessed Spi-
rit, **Three** excellent Persons, one glorious God,
bee ascribed all Honour and Praise,
now, and for evermore.

Amen.

FINIS.

C 1731
16940
With care.

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